REMARKS

An Excess Claim Fee Payment Letter is submitted herewith to cover the cost of three (3) excess total claims.

Claims 1-10 and 21-33 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 and 10 have been amended to further define the claimed invention. Claims 21-33 have been added to claim additional features of the claimed invention.

The claim amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability. Applicants also note that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

Claims 6 and10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph and claims 1-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anzai (U.S. Patent No. 5,923,933) combined with Japanese Patent No. 2000-267338.

These rejections are reversed in view of the following discussion.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

The claimed invention is directed to an image forming method which includes developing an electrostatic latent image formed on an image carrier with a developing device into a toner image using toners, transferring said toner image onto a recording medium, and fixing said toner image transferred onto said recording medium to thereby form a recorded image on a recording sheet.

In the claimed invention, a peripheral speed ratio (S1 = Vm1 / Vp) between the peripheral speed (Vm1) of said first developing roller and the peripheral speed (Vp) of said image carrier is set in the range of 0.8 - 2.0, and a peripheral speed ratio (S2 = Vm2 / Vp) between the peripheral speed (Vm2) of said second developing roller and the peripheral speed (Vp) of said image carrier is set in the range of 1.05 - 2.0. In addition, the shape coefficients SF1, SF2 of said toners of the developing agent respectively satisfying the following conditions: $120 \leq SF1 \leq 170$ and $110 \leq$

SF2 ≤ 130.

Importantly, in the present invention, developing the electrostatic latent image includes preventing an excessive stress from being applied to said developing agent between said first and second developing rollers to restrict an occurrence of photographic fog. As noted above, the claimed invention restricts an occurrence of photographic fog, resulting in an improved image.

II. THE 35 USC §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTION

The Examiner alleges that claims 6 and 10 are indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicant submits, however, that these claims have been amended to address the Examiner's concerns.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are not indefinite. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection.

III. THE 35 USC §112, FIRST PARAGRAPH REJECTION

The Examiner alleges that claims 1-10 are not enabled under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. Applicant submits, however, that these claims are enabled.

Specifically, Applicant would point out that claims 1 and 2 have been amended to recite "*consisting mainly of toners and magnetic carriers*".

Further, claims 1 and 2 have been amended to recite "*wherein said developing said electrostatic latent image comprises preventing an excessive stress from being applied to said developing agent between said first and second developing rollers to restrict an occurrence of photographic fog*". Applicant submits that this is clearly disclosed in the Application (e.g., see page 19, line 21-page 21, line 25).

With respect to claims 4 and 8, Applicant would point out that the Specification has been amended to correct a typographical error on page 17. Therefore, these claims are clearly enabled by the Specification.

With respect to claims 5 and 9, and claims 6 and 10, Applicant submits that these claims have been amended to address the Examiner's concerns.

Therefore, Applicant submits that these claims are adequately enabled by the specification. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection.

IV. THE ANZAI AND JP '338 REFERENCES

The Examiner alleges that Anzai would have been combined with JP '338 to form the claimed invention. Applicant submits, however, that these references would not have been combined and even if combined, the combination would not teach or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention.

Specifically, these references are directed to different problems and solutions. Indeed, Anzai is directed to a method in which the ratio of sliding friction force is matched with other features to allegedly provide a uniform image, whereas, JP '338 is not directed to a method including two developing rollers (e.g., a center feed developing system). Therefore, these references are completely unrelated, and no person of ordinary skill in the art would have considered combining these disparate references, absent impermissible hindsight. Further, Applicant submits that the Examiner can point to no motivation or suggestion in the references to urge the combination as alleged by the Examiner.

Moreover, neither Anzai, nor JP '338, nor any combination thereof teaches or suggests "*wherein said developing said electrostatic latent image comprises preventing an excessive stress from being applied to said developing agent between said first and second developing rollers to restrict an occurrence of photographic fog*" as recited in claims 1 and 2.

Unlike conventional image forming methods which produce increased stress on the developing agent, destabilizing an image quality, in the claimed method, developing the electrostatic latent image includes preventing an excessive stress from being applied to said developing agent between said first and second developing rollers to restrict an occurrence of photographic fog. Thus, the claimed invention can stabilize an image quality (e.g., restrict a photographic fog) even at high speeds (e.g., Vp=1800 mm/s) (Application at page 22, lines 18-21).

Clearly, these novel features are not taught or suggested by the cited references. Indeed, nowhere has the Examiner identified where these features are taught or suggested by the

references.

In fact, even assuming that Anzai may disclose a center feed developing system, nowhere does Anzai even teach or suggest any relationship between an excessive stress applied to the developing agent between the first and second developing rollers, and an occurrence of photographic fog. Certainly, Anzai does not teach or suggest any manner of preventing such excessive stress from being applied to the developing agent (e.g., by controlling a shape of the toner particles).

Further, Anzai may disclose preventing an occurrence of fog, but Anzai teaches that preventing such occurrence is only attained by rapidly dispersing toner in the developing agent and charging up to a required charge amount in a short time (Anzai at col. 5, lines 30-37). In addition, Anzai only teaches one cause of photographic fog, which is lowering the pushing pressure of the blade member 30 against the photosensitive cleaning (Anzai at col. 8, lines 30-44).

Likewise, the JP '338 reference does not teach or suggest the novel features of the claimed invention. Indeed, the Examiner attempts to rely on the JP '338 reference as teaching the ranges for the shape coefficients SF1 and SF2 as in the claimed invention. However, the Examiner completely ignores the fact that the JP '338 reference does not teach or suggest that the ranges of shape coefficients in JP '338 are not directed to a center feed developing system.

Indeed, Applicant submits that optimum shape coefficients for one type of developing system (e.g., a forward feed developing system) may not be optimum for another type of developing system (e.g., center feed developing system). Thus, the Examiner is comparing disparate objects/features (e.g., "apples to oranges") in this instance.

Moreover, Applicant submits that the claimed invention may prevent an excessive stress from being applied to said developing agent between said first and second developing rollers to restrict an occurrence of photographic fog. However, JP '338 does not even teach or suggest first and second developing rollers. Therefore, JP '338 is completely unrelated to the claimed invention. Therefore, JP '338 clearly does not make up for the deficiencies of Anzai.

Therefore, Applicant submits that these references would not have been combined and even if combined, the combination would not teach or suggest each and every element of the

claimed invention. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection.

V. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-10 and 21-33, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: 10/1/04

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